

Upper Darby, PA— According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Both the number of unemployed persons (8.8 million) and the unemployment rate (5.7 percent) rose in July.” To best equip individuals in our region with the practical skills needed for a job search, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) and the state agency PHEAA (Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency) collaborated to present a free Job Search Strategies and Interview Skills Workshop at Upper Darby High School. The event offered job seekers workshops with advice on interviewing, resume-writing and networking, among others —

“I want to thank PHEAA and specifically Michael Robinson for their efforts in putting together this important event,” said Congressman Sestak. “This seminar perfectly complemented the work I have done on workforce development by holding a summit, forming an advisory committee and establishing partnerships between local businesses and education institutions. We need to ensure that area students obtain the skills they need to be prepared for the job market.”

“The current economic climate has caused atrophic job opportunities in America,” said Michael Robinson, Assistant Regional Director-PHEAA (Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency). “Job seekers need to become savvier about how they search and compete for job opportunities in a very competitive market.”

The event began with remarks from the Congressman on the need for government, businesses and educators to take a proactive approach to developing a workforce that is prepared for a job market in an era of extraordinary technological advancements. Following a panel discussion with area business leaders and Human Resources professionals, the attendees received individual attention during breakout sessions with experts on job searching, such as a consulting group’s vice president of training and development, a representative from Delaware County Community College involved with career advising and presidents of local businesses.

“The communications and networking advice provided at this event are not only critical for the application process, but also for people to use once they find a job,” said Congressman Sestak. “It was great to have an event that included small forums that allowed my constituents to ask personal questions about their experiences and to interact one-on-one with people who have seen the mistakes that people often make both in attempting to sell themselves as a prospective employee and trying to advance to higher positions.”

In addition to helping job seekers with the process of finding work, Congressman Sestak has

invested significantly in ensuring that students have the technical skills they need for jobs available in the region. Many business owners in his District have told the Congressman that there are not enough qualified employees in certain fields, particularly those that involve artisan skills and require advanced math training. The Congressman has started a new initiative, developed from ideas discussed at a Workforce Development Summit and within his Higher Education and Workforce Development Advisory Committee, which creates partnerships between area businesses and secondary schools to introduce students to these careers.

Furthermore, the Congressman has worked through the federal appropriations process to obtain funding for a job readiness program run through the Delaware County Chamber Foundation. Earlier in the day, Congressman Sestak presented a \$282,000 check to Delaware County Community College President Jerry Parker to be used to develop a series of entrepreneurial programs for students pursuing trade careers, such as automotive technology, carpentry and welding.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the Congress.

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